So, It's Finally Out in the Open:

NC Declares Trotskyism "Incompatible" With Solidarity

A Response by Roy Rollin (NYC Branch) for the Supporters of the ITO in Solidarity

Having spent weeks preparing for it by lining up 11 NC members in advance on the basis of what Steve Bloom has called "completely one-sided and false information," it should come as no surprise that the NC majority was able to handily pass an "emergency motion" declaring the politics of the ITO "decisively different from and incompatible with that pursued by Solidarity" at the January 29-30 NC meeting. In addition, the motion banned any further "recruitment of political supporters of the ITO to Solidarity...as members or sympathizers" at the January NC meeting. The fact that not only were those of us accused by this kangaroo court even informed of the proceedings up until the last minute, and thus indicted, tried and convicted in absentia speaks miles about the "open, clear and democratic manner" that comrade Finkel, who chose to make himself the persecuting attorney, fancies Solidarity to be a model of. So too does not providing NC members, known to be wary of these type of star chamber proceedings, with all the documentation provided those already lined up for the lynch mob along with the personal berating the former received from the latter for their troubles. Bourgeois jurisprudence at least refers to such practices as jury tampering and inadmissible evidence. In "Soliland," they would appear to pass as "democratic political values."

Once again, we are forced to ask ourselves just what is it that the NC majority is so scared of that they have to resort to this type of undemocratic behavior? Especially if those of us in the ITO are nothing more than a band of "religious sectarians" with views so "decisively different" from the rest of the group. Perhaps the NC majority fears that there may be a few more non-"exemplary members of Solidarity" out there longing for deities other than despair and disillusionment. Or maybe this is meant to be a warning, coinciding with the start of the pre-convention discussion period, not just to the ITO in particular, but to Solidarity in general, that *anyone* with *any* ideas considered "different" may wind up having their "political loyalties" questioned. All members of Solidarity should take this into account and respond in kind by demanding that this motion be immediately overturned.

The ITO: Clear and Present Danger or All Purpose Scapegoat

Just as Jack Barnes once needed the "Barzman letter" before he could get his "enabling act" to settle scores with the Internationalist Tendency years ago, the NC majority today chooses to legitimize its actions by appealing to what Steve Bloom characterizes as the "crisis needing action." In other words, a flimsy pretext was needed to "make the discussion non-postponable;" "a state of crisis" in the New York branch according to comrade Finkel's "motivation." Leaving aside the fact that Finkel nowhere in said motivation "specifically discuss(es) the situation as it relates to the NY branch," it should be obvious to all concerned that such a "crisis" existed long before the liquidation of the FIT and the emergence of the ITO. As Anthony Marcus' "Why I Sympathize With The ITO" points out in detail this has far more to do with the ongoing antics of an undeclared faction that has long held the branch in thrall and previously was not exactly on most favored nation status with the denizens of Detroit. The dire threat posed by the ITO, however, appears to have forced them into a temporary marriage of convenience against us. It is, in fact, the stranglehold of this troika, rather than the ITO's "decisively different...set of politics" that has ensured that the NY branch does not "modestly grow," let alone "recruit some extraordinarily talented young activists."

Anyone desiring a clearer picture of this crisis should carefully read Steve Bloom's January 3rd letter to the members of the NY branch. Having functioned as the de facto organizer of the NY branch, Steve is certainly in a position to know the score. He attributes the "severe crisis" to "the very low p..ority (given) to the work (done) for the branch," the "contempt" express(ed) for what he defines as "a layer of activist comrades with a perspective of working hard to build a branch" and to the "'bending the stick' too far in the opposite direction, of severely *over*compensating for past mistakes." Or as Anthony aptly puts it, the "weigh(ing of) the disappointments of a few thousand radical youth of 20 years ago, who badly misjudged the relationship of social forces against the historical lessons of 10 decades of 20th century history." Now, however "different from and incompatible" the ITO may be seen to be from the mainstream of Solidarity, it should be clear that none of the above are to be found amongst the charges the judge, jury and executioner "discussed" in their motivation, "specifically" or otherwise. And how could they. For then they would have to point the finger of blame for the "crisis" where it belongs, at themselves and not at the ITO, which, in NY, has at least helped "recruit some extraordinarily talented young activists," as well as some, who while they may not be so young, have already proven themselves to be extraordinarily talented (the Trotskyist Faction). Or at least most Solidarity members seemed to think they were when they worked side-by-side with them during the Gulf War. This is whom comrade Finkel wishes to "defend our borders against" in a "manner" that is not only *not* "democratic," but "decisively different from and incompatible" with Solidarity's Founding Political Statement which gives the branch final say on any such questions.

Trotskyists Should Be Seen But Not Heard

Reporting to the NY branch for the NC majority, Kit Wainer finally let the cat out of the bag when he cited the ITO's insistence on the key role of the vanguard party in the revolutionary process and our continuing to view Trotskyism as the continuation of the classical Marxist tradition as constituting the main areas of incompatibility between the ITO and Solidarity. Indeed, as we have pointed out over and over again, the ITO exists as "a faction (within the Fourth Internationalist movement)" precisely to defend these conceptions against the USFI majority's attempts to abandon them in theory and in practice in favor of lowest common denominator fusion fiascoes with some ill-defined "world revolutionary movement," about whom noone seems to know anything...other than that any identification with Trotskyism is taboo. So it would appear that the NC majority has finally come to the conclusion that Leninism and Trotskyism are beyond the pale, insofar as Solidarity is concerned, or as comrade Finkel put its, "what you cannot have is both of these at once."

If that is indeed the case than the NC should immediately proceed to serve notice on all those former members of the FIT currently residing in Solidarity. For unless they are prepared to abandon whatever commitment they may left in them to the building of a Leninist party and towards that set of politics that has come to be known as Trotskyism., it would appear that

they are not wanted any more than those of us in the ITO. As we shall soon see, the "open and non-sectarian" comrade Finkel does not single out the ITO in sectarian fashion as the sole Trots he has a bone to pick with; he makes it quite clear that, in his mind, the whole kit and caboodle deserves to be placed on the endangered species list. Thus he proclaims that "it will have to be without (him)" that "you can...have an organization that considers itself to be based on 'Trotskyism.'" We would have few qualms about this, since apparently "the only serious point on which (we) agree with" comrade Finkel appears to be the cat question (being felinophiles). However, we wonder what those ex-FITers who thought back in September of 1992, and more importantly, still think, that going into and being in Solidarity was, and is, a step towards building a Leninist party, now think of all this. Of course, if they, like the USFI majority, are content to be closet Trotskyists, who know "their place," or as Alan Wald put it, "put" (and keep) their Lenin, Trotsky and Cannon "on the shelf," then they may have as little trouble swallowing this "emergency motion" and all that's behind it as they have had in digesting everything else that's been served up so far. Should they not care for the taste of it (let alone have no desire "to conceive of ourselves more like-1917 Social Democracy") and still seek some Trotsky sauce to make the meal more palatable, then they should be prepared to get sent to their rooms without any supper at all. For in Solidarity, Trotskyists *may* be seen but not heard and when they're seen in public it better not be as Trotskyists. Come to think of it, this sounds a lot like Bill Clinton's position on gays in the army!

Comrade Finkel's "Clear, Open and Democratic Manner" for "Debat(ing) Thorny Problems"...

As we saw in "Honk If Your'e Tired of Roy," Joanna Misnik's modus operandi consists of evoking painful memories from the bad old days in what she describes as "some more infantile organizations" every time she wants to avoid dealing with the disputes and debates of today along with throwing her arms up in despair over how "unrelentingly complex" the universe is and how insufficient program is to deal with it. For David Finkel, duplicity and doublespeak, along with a hearty dose of sanctimonious hypocrisy and handwringing must constitute the Solidarity "ethos" as he sees it. Having already proved himself past master on this score by claiming that his pious pleas for "support(ing)...bombing the Serbian military supply lines" was "an indictment of the actual form of imperialist intervention," (for only starving, rather than bombing, the Serbs, we suppose), comrade Finkel proceeds to outdo himself in reading the riot act to ITO supporters.

Thus he is all in favor of "be(ing) open" and "test(ing)...ideas out in debate" at the same time he helps keep ITO documents out of the debate by banishing them from the pages of the discussion bulletin and sees red at the thought of what he calls "bloody factional stakes" and "warfare." Now, let's leave aside the fact that whatever "blood" may be spilled in such "warfare" would certainly pale in comparison to that caused by the US/UN air strikes against Serbia he so clamored for. Aren't faction fights supposed to be part and parcel of an organization that claims to be based on "democratic political values" and that sincerely seeks to "debate thorny problems." Or is such "debate" only open to those whose views comrade Finkel deems compatible with his. Or maybe to those, who, while they may disagree with the call to, say, bomb Serbia or vote for Bill Clinton, aren't about to draw any "premature" conclusions from such positions and are all too content to slap each other on the back for sticking to "revolutionary principles" at the same time they trample upon them..

...Avoid "Bloody Factional Stakes" by Declaring Dissent Disloyal

The ban on factions by the Bolsheviks in the aftermath of the civil war has long been one of the mantras routinely trotted out (no pun intended) by the Leninism-leads-to-Stalinism school in the pages of *ATC* to "prove" their point. Seems one can be all in favor of abstract "democracy" in an isolated and war-ravished Soviet Russia in 1921 or Cuba today, but oppose it in Solidarity. Unless one really believes that the ITO has Solidarity blockaded. Only, in reality, it has been the PC, and now the NC, that has tried to embargo the ideas of the ITO. Since it appears that for comrade Finkel, the very idea of attempting to struggle with comrades to try to change the course of the organization is in and of itself "incompatible," we would assume that the late and unlamented Gerry Healy and the Spartacist League's James Robertson, who both knew how to avoid "bloody factional stakes"...by staging pre-emptive strikes on anyone and everyone who may rub them the wrong way, must "fit (his) taste." Indeed, "for this purpose (he) can join the Spartacist League" which hasn't "seen factional warfare" since 1968, since that appears to be the kind of "open, clear and democratic manner that is consistent" with his politics.

One would think that for those who went through the "factional warfare" of the sixties and seventies, which by their own accounts make the horrors of the Vietnam war seem insignificant in comparison, the right *not* to be declared disloyal for creating a faction would be a lesser evil than stifling the internal life of an organization through forbidding debate. Or is keeping serious political discussion at a minimum the price to be paid in a group where the lowest level of political consciousness serves as the scotch tape that holds it together? Afterall, when young activists are deliberately un- and/or miseducated in order to provide a safe base of support for the leadership, such discussion becomes downright dangerous. Thus it must remain the preserve of the inner circle that constitutes the majority of the leadership. For wherever the dissent comes from, any excess amount of it, ie, what comrade Finkel hopes to ward off by referring to it as "bloody factional stakes" and "warfare," threatens to topple the whole house of cards. Maybe if Solidarity was an organization where a high level of agreement on general politics and a wide knowledge of Marxist theory prevailed, a high level of internal debate could be tolerated. The political line of the organization would be determined by majority rule and individual members would be greatly concerned about what line was adopted since they would have to defend it in public. But then we would be talking about Leninism and democratic centralism which forces members to argue their positions internally up to and including the forming of factions. And that is what the NC majority has in fact deemed "decisively different from and incompatible" with Solidarity and thus the real excess to be avoided.

Who Gave Comrade Finkel His Veterinary License, Beavis and Butthead?

Comrade Finkel claims that he is for "build(ing) a revolutionary formation that is open to a broad range of ideological views." Yet he a priori goes on to exclude any and every variant of Trotskyist in general and "political supporters of the ITO" like the Trotskyist Faction and the Trotskyist League in particular. That is, unless the "dement(ed)" Trotskyist League, being "foaming-at-the-mouth, movement-wrecking crazies" "appl(y) to join a sane revolutionary socialist organization...accompanied by a veterinary certificate of rabies and distemper vaccination." This from the same David Finkel who, waxed indignant at John Daniel for laying a finger on the head of Sam Farber "that his (Daniel's) method of conducting a discussion in Solidarity is

absolutely unacceptable." It might be of interest to Finkel to know that the "dement(ed)" TL recently helped stage a highly successful fundraising event for locked-out Jacobson and Staley workers in Ann Arbor with LPA. In addition, TL supporters in the UAW went out of their way to obtain copies of an upcoming Ford contract for the staff of *Labor Notes* to scrutinize. If this is what Finkel's veterinary talents diagnose as "movement-wrecking" I can only hope that even fewer of our four-legged furry friends come under his care than do "extraordinarily talented young activists" since both would appear to have a rather sorry fate in store for them. (Of course, if Finkel's friends in the NY branch have their way they won't be getting many of the latter anyway.)

For our part, we would have to question the sanity of anyone intent on seeking the services of a vet whose motto appears to be that he has no answers. Small wonder anyone who thinks that they have any answers appears to be "foaming at the mouth." Perhaps somewhere on the wall of comrade Finkel's veterinary office is a yellowing certificate reassuring his clients (and more importantly, himself) that "yes, we *are* revolutionaries." It might have even been presented by old Dr. Draper himself some years back. However, considering that the latter broke with Max Shactman precisely over his support for the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, it's rather likely that he would find Finkel's support for imperialist intervention in the Balkans as "decisively different from and incompatible" with his politics as we find it with ours.

As Finkel himself would say, "you can, if you want have an organization that considers itself to be" revolutionary sans Trotskyism, but than "it will have to be without" any revolutionaries! For if one chooses to exclude organizations as varied and diverse as the ISO, the TL and SA to name but a few, who's left on the left to "regroup" with? The ANC-cheerleaders in the AISP, the unrepentant reformists of the COC, maybe even the DSA. Are their credentials insofar as "working class loyalty" so far and away superior to those of the Trotskyists Finkel wags his finger at? Not unless supporting the Democratic Party in the US and "progressive" capitalists via "two-stage" revolutions in the Third World constitute examples of "socialism from below." Similarly, the "loyalty" of ITO supporters is in question due to our having a "distinct organizational structure" and connections to groups like the TL and TF. Yet not a few Solidarity members also happen to belong to groups like the SP, the COC and other class-collaborationist outfits, which not only have "distinct organizational structure(s)" but "set(s) of politics...decisively different from and incompatible" with those elaborated in the Solidarity Founding Political Statement. Or are only Leninism and Trotskyism "incompatible" with "working class loyalty" as defined by comrade Finkel? Kind of makes a mockery of any kind of revolutionary regroupment, but I suppose it does let Solidarity members "know who and what we are" or at least what Finkel and the NC majority would like to be.

Marxism or Movementism?

No "less clear than" comrade Finkel when it comes to the "character of the approaches to building a revolutionary socialist organization" are NC majority supporters in the NY branch who are quite up front about their rejection of Leninism and Trotskyism. For David Levin, the latter is but "bizarro-crapola" (no relation to the Chicago White Sox pitcher Juan Bizarro, circa late sixties, is there?) and "garbage" that "real workers" instinctively recoil from. While David hopes to crudely class-bait us as petty-bourgeois dilettantes whose "sectarian" proclivities are over and apart from the class struggle, what he is really implying is that "real workers" are too stupid to be interested in politics in general and socialist politics in particular. Afterall it is the ABC of movementism to counterpose the "practical work of building the movements," at the lowest level of common-denominator consciousness, of course, to what is wrongly seen as abstract propagandizing for socialism. Spontaneist illusions that "consistent" trade unionism, feminism, nationalism or pacifism will lead of their own accord to socialism, without the political centralization the vanguard alone is capable of providing are but the flipside of the same coin. We are well aware of the fact that a revolutionary who divorces him or herself from the mass movement will most likely become a sectarian. But divorced from the program of revolutionary Marxism, cadres buried in mass movements succumb to opportunism.

Building a party that functions as a "tribune of the oppressed," is the only effective way of building mass movements. That is, if one aspires to help lead those movements in a socialist direction that avoids the sectoralization and fragmentation that single-issuism inevitably leads to. Rosa Luxemburg pointed this out when she wrote that, "the practical daily struggle for reforms...offers...the only means of engaging in the proletarian class struggle and working in the direction of the final goal: the conquest of political power..." It took Lenin and Trotsky to translate it into reality through the medium of the vanguard party, the united front tactic and an action program of transitional demands that link revolution to the actual activity and organizations of the working class. Leninism is thus more than an abstract organizational conception; it is a strategy for revolution in the imperialist epoch.

Of course, if one no longer believes in the revolutionary character of our epoch. then it's a whole different ballgame. For David goes on to recite the tired refrain that while Leninism may be a good thing if revolution is right around the corner, it becomes an annoyance in a non-revolutionary period, not to mention a downright obstacle to him bringing his myriad of contacts, all "real workers," no doubt, to branch meetings. Does David really believe that working class militants, who have been educated in nothing but immediate demands, will in some mysterious way suddenly become capable of revolutionary consciousness and action in a revolutionary situation without a revolutionary organization's having conducted socialist propaganda beforehand? By his turning thumbs down on building an organization that is capable of uniting theory with practice, of understanding and assimilating the lessons of the past in order to apply them in the present and the future, of concentrating and centralizing any and every manifestation of struggle into the fight for socialism, and an organization that in the retreats of today prepares for the advances of tomorrow, it would appear that he does.

From the Augean Stables: The Big Stink Over Kronstadt

Speaking of tired refrains, Majeed returns from the Augean stables of anti-communism making a big stink over Kronstadt (maybe he met Boris Yeltsin there) and Taylorism as "not being accidental" accompaniments of Bolshevism and prooving beyond a shadow of a doubt that Leninism leads to Stalinism, and thus that ITO politics are incompatible with those of Solidarity. Yes, Majeed we understand that these things were not accidental; they were part and parcel of some other things unfortunately not accidental to the class struggle in fever pitch: civil war, counterrevolution, economic devastation and dislocation and international isolation. Besides, the Trotskyist movement has never made a virtue out of necessity; episodic aspects of Bolshevik policy in Russia during the civil war are not inscribed in the how-to's of the transition period in any of the

major programmatic documents the Fourth International bases itself upon. Of course, understanding why such measures were tragically, but necessarily undertaken by a besieged revolution requires a bit more understanding of Marxist methodology and the history of the class struggle than the blowing and swaying with the winds of petty-bourgeois public opinion in a period of reaction and retreat appear to permit. And hopefully, they be blowing in a downwind direction. For in every period of reaction and retreat, the same old anti-communist excrescence seems to rise to the surface. Only each time, they not only smell worse with age, but appear to overcome more and more repentant radicals with their oh-so-unpleasant aromas.

While Majeed thinks Leninism leads to Stalinism, Barbara Zeluck thinks that the Trotskyist Faction are just plain Stalinists. Yet at the same time she has no problem advocating the use of Stalinist methods against ITO supporters; constantly clamoring for the censorship of ITO documents when imposing poll tax at branch meetings fails to do the trick. While the TF may have wrongly supported sending Soviet tanks into Budapest in 1956, it is quite clear Barbara would have no trouble sending them to the College of Staten Island today. Thus Barbara advises us to leave on our own accord...so she and her friends won't have to go through the trouble of throwing us out and exposing just how "open and non-sectarian," not to mention "democratic," they really are. However, Barbara seems to suffer from a bad case of political dyslexia, so perhaps, we should show some pity towards her. Thus while the ITO says and writes that "the only possible cause socialists can espouse is mutual defeatism and the unification of Yugoslavia and the rest of the Balkans in a socialist federation" we *really* are supporting Belgrade (just as the US must be when it when it has an economic embargo in place against the Serbs). By Barbara's logic, Lenin must have been pro-German as well for advocating mutual defeatism in the First World War. Similarly, although we have stated and written on more than one occasion that "for a vanguard organization to become a vanguard party it has to be recognized as such by the 'more advanced part of the working class' and not just its own membership," Barbara chooses to endlessly berate us for seeing ourselves as the vanguard. As Joanna Misnik would say, "go figure to you."

Sorry, Charlie: Theory and Practice Do Have Some Relation

Not surprisingly, our old friend, Charlie Post, is in a category all of his own. For unlike the others, he still claims to defend many of the same programmatic precepts as does the ITO. Thus Charlie is not so quick to relegate Trotskyism to the dungheap of history the way so many of the others are. He still sees much of value in it, although not in its conception of the crisis of proletarian leadership. Of course, this has far more to do with his affinities for the USFI majority's liquidationist appetites than it does with the rigors of his "scientific" analysis. Afterall, what "scientist" would reject the tools of revolution before having perfected better ones? The real problem is that for Charlie such ideas are all fine and good...as long as they remain on paper and as a fellow named Joe Stalin once said, paper will take anything that's printed on it. Connecting, rather than contrasting, theory to practice, well, that's another story. Thus Charlie would probably agree with us that voting for Democrats, calling for imperialist intervention in Yugoslavia or burying one's head in the ground insofar as the bourgeois state is concerned are not the stuff revolutionary Marxists are made of. But while he may write an "educational" document or two about them, and quite good ones at that, he's not about to advocate that any organizational measures be taken against the culprits. Least of all is the "scientific" methodology he claims to employ going to allow him to draw any conclusions that people who take such positions, not to mention those who alibi them, should not be calling the shots in any self-styled revolutionary organization.

Thus Charlie compares the positions taken by leading Solidarity members on Clinton and Bosnia to leading Bolsheviks' initial rejection of Lenin's April Thesis. Both cases, he claims were but abberations, as the base quickly moved to straighten out the top. If historical analogies are in order here, they would appear to be with pre-1914 German Social Democracy rather than the Bolsheviks. A bit more like August, 1914 than April, 1917, although to be fair to the SPD, they had less "loose boundaries of discipline" than does Solidarity. As Charlie well knows, the out- and-out reformists of the Eduard Bernstein school were given but the mildest of treatment by the leaderships of the SPD just as those Solidarity members who supported voting for Bill Clinton were given a gentle tap on the wrist by the NC. Similarly, those who supported the Kaiser's war effort were amnestied and apologized for by Kautsky and Co. just as those who jumped on board the bomb Serbia bandwagon were given blank checks by the NC majority. Needless to say, in both organizations, those opposing the leadership from the left, were, and are, seen as the main threat. Afterall it isn't the politics of the PC on Yugoslavia, Brenner and Jordan on Clinton or Jason Moore on the state that have been declared "incompatible" with Solidarity's and none of them, at least to our knowledge, have been so kindly advised to take a powder at the earliest possible convenience. Only we doubt that David Finkel (or even Joanna Misnik, for that matter) are in a position to do to us what Ebert and Noske did to to Rosa Luxemburg.

That is, in fact, the "strawman" Charlie accuses us of endlessly beating. Surely, a smart fellow like you, Charlie, didn't think that we were under the illusion that in an organization that takes such pride in not "put(ting) forward a monolithic platform which we all have adapted to" (what you once called and we still call a "program") and has such "fairly loose boundaries of discipline" (except in regards to the ITO), that the leadership would even presume to take a public position on any of these issues. Afterall, as the David Levins of the world would surely say, what "real worker" cares about such "garbage" as Yugoslavia anyway. No doubt, Charlie Post does, but this is where mindless movementism and mechanistic materialism (or what Anthony Marcus has dubbed "bad periodism") find themselves "coming together"...in an organization which maintains no programmatic and organizational cohesion and firmness except against those of us who advocate that it do so.

Who We Are, What We Are and What We Want to Become

For comrade Finkel "if Solidarity is to maintain its character, it will have to defend it, in a...manner that is consistent with our reasons for existing in the first place." We would agree that the means chosen by comrade Finkel and the NC majority are most certainly "consistent" with the ends *they* have in mind. That is an organization, which in a period of reaction and retreat, instead of effecting that retreat in good order and resisting the demoralization and despair that comes along the way, stops resisting and whose main concern is to prevent anyone else from doing so in an an effective and organized fashion. Only they are anything but "politically open, clear and democratic" just as the "Trotskyists Need Not Apply" sign the emergency motion represents is anything but "open and non-sectarian." The latter has far more in common with the "small-time thuggery" comrade Finkel attributes to the Morenoites. It would

seem that those who choose to reject all or many of the programmatic acquisitions of the past associated with Leninism and Trotskyism as so many "dogmatic" balls-and-chains holding them back from future fusion fiascoes have no such problems when it comes to embracing or excusing precisely those politics from the past that Leninism and Trotskyism emerged in opposition to, along with the ways and means of implementing them as well.

As far as those of us in the ITO are concerned, we too know who and what we are as well as what we would like to see this organization become. We are neither programmatic nor organizational fetishists. For us Marxism remains a method of analysis and guide to action for the working class and program a dialectically interelated totality of what one does as well as what one says. Our program remains that of Leninism and Trotskyism; the development of Marxism in relation to the major phenomena of the century. It may not have offered all the answers but it offered more than any other current within the workers movement did. It not only still does, but continues to represent the starting point and framework for any "updating" that needs to be done. As Antonio Gramsci affirmed, "Marxism must be developed on its own foundation," for there is no other base firm enough to do so on.

While we are well aware of the fact that we are not *the* vanguard, we have no desire to remain the rearguard, wallowing in humility and "lack of pretension" that we either have no answers or "that we must follow if we are to have any hope of leading." Indeed, we have seen all too often where such following leads to. We continue to insist on sharply differentiating between the handfuls of vanguard militants who are to be found in the ranks of various left organizations (the majority of whom just happen to consider themselves Trotskyists) and the vanguard layer of working class activists and understand that the merger of the two will be the first small step in the direction of creating a genuine vanguard party. For until the vanguard layer is won over, influence within the working class as a whole will remain impossible. But unless we programatically and organizationally work towards that goal in a conscious manner, such influence will forever remain elusive. Therefore we remain Leninists because not only is the Leninist theory of organization firmly rooted in and reflective of the realities of contemporary capitalism, it is just as firmly based upon the peculiarities of the proletariat as an oppressed and exploited class. As James P. Cannon pointed out, Leninism is "deep-rooted in two of the weightiest realities of the twentieth century: the actuality of the workers' struggle for the conquest of power, and the necessity of creating a leadership capable of carrying it through to the end." We would agree with Paul LeBlanc that,

> A simple, or "sophisticated," rejection of Leninism by would-be revolutionary socialists will...lead to a dead end under today's circumstances. Until the imperialist stage of capitalism and the need for socialist revolution are left behind, Leninism cannot be "transcended," just as we cannot go beyond Marxism until we go beyond the realities which Marxism describes...

Of course, there are those, both in Solidarity and the USFI, who, mistaking the moment for the epoch, believe that "there has been a change of epoch" and conclude the need for "non strategically defined parties" that "draw together all those who sincerely want to fight for the transformation of society without...having to agree on reform or revolution." In other words, since revolution is no longer on the agenda, who needs a revolutionary party based on a revolutionary program standing in the way of getting at all those ready, willing and able reformists? While the period that has opened in the world class struggle since 1989 contains many elements of defeat, it also offers great possibilities for revolutionaries if they are able to consistently struggle for a socialist solution to the continuing crisis of capitalism and in this way build their strength. Those who have reacted by a profound shift to the right, wringing their hands in despair and disillusionment and rejecting a revolutionary perspective for the foreseeable future insure beforehand that whatever positive potential exists will be lost.

For a Leninist Tendency!

That is why those of us in Solidarity who support the ITO see the need to develop a new direction for building this organization that can enable it to face up to the tasks that revolutionary socialists have historically posed. Such a course cannot be realized unless there is a break with the policy of the leadership, not only with its practical politics but with the theoretical and strategic basis of politics as well. Therefore it is necessary to develop a clear political fight in Solidarity for a profound change of policy in counterposition to the present leadership. To do this we call upon all comrades who agree with us in understanding the limitations of the present policy to join with us in a *Leninist Tendency*. If certain leading members of this organization think we are being "out of line" let alone "decisively different" and "incompatible" for our doing so, than we challenge them to respond in a political and not a police fashion.

In order to transform Solidarity into a vanguard *organization*, committed to the construction of a vanguard *party*, we specifically advocate:

- Establishment of democratic-centralist ("unity of action, freedom of discussion and criticism") organizational norms.
- The centralization in theory and practice of all the struggles of the exploited and oppressed that Solidarity members are active in into a single flow towards socialist politics.
- The carrying out of a Marxist, not a a movementist, perspective based upon the united front tactic and the transitional methodology in the struggles of the specially oppressed as well as in the antifascist and antiracist movements, reproductive rights movement and clinic defense, AIDS actions and international solidarity efforts.
- Implementation of a class-struggle policy in the unions based upon transitional demands which connects the fight for rank-and-file democracy to the need for the political independence of the working class (a labor party based on the unions) and ties the struggles of the trade unions to those of all the exploited and oppressed.
- A principled policy of *revolutionary* regroupment, directed, first and foremost, towards Trotskyists (the ISO, TL, Labor Militant, FSP, SA, etc.) as well as organizations like Workers World, which continue to exercise influence over considerable sections of radicalizing youth and oppressed minorities.
- Affiliation of the organization as a whole to the USFI.
- Creation of a "line" publication that serves as an organizing vehicle as well as an education device.
- Systematic promotion of the political education and development of Solidarity members.

We invite all members of Solidarity who agree with the general line of this platform, as well as those ideas already expressed by us and our international co-thinkers in the pages of the *Discussion Bulletin* to join us. At the same time we remain ready to *bloc* with comrades, who while they may not agree with all the particulars of our perspective, agree on specific points where united action is possible, and even to form a broader-based tendency to fight for a Leninist and Trotskyist perspective, especially within the FIC. ■